(b) the total length of railway lines being converted into broad gauge in Tamil Nadu; and

(c) whether any time-frame has been fixed by Government for conversion of all metre gauge lines into broad gauge lines in Tamil Nadu?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) 1184 Km of metre gauge lines falling fully/partly in the State of Tamil Nadu are existing.

(b) Work on 1109 Kms of metre gauge lines falling fully/partly in the State of Tamil Nadu has been taken up.

(c) Majority of metre gauge lines are planned to be converted to broad gauge during Eleventh Five Year Plan depending upon availability of resources.

Replacement of incandescent lamps by CFL

922. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has drawn up plans to replace more than 29 lakh incandescent lamps with Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFL) in railway premises and staff quarters all over India to save substantially on energy bills;

(b) whether this project would be taken up at no cost to the Railways and if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether his Ministry has also considered the extent of environmental hazards caused by used CFL which has toxic coatings on its shells?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir. In this project 4 nos. of CFLs will be supplied free of cost to the each Railway employee residing in Railway quarters. A tender in this regard has been opened on 29.07.08, which is under consideration.

(c) Yes, Sir.

Slow growth in steel production

923. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been slow growth in steel production in recent times in the country;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether correspondingly import of steel has been increased; and

(d) if so, the measures taken or proposed to be taken to, (i) increase the domestic production (ii) lessen country's dependence on import of steel and (iii) ensure supply of raw materials on large scale for domestic steel producers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI JITIN PRASADA): (a) As per the provisional data of steel production for the year 2007-08 compiled by the Joint Plant Committee, the rate of growth in production has come down to 5.2% in 2007-08 from 12.8% in 2006-07. During the period April-August 2008, the growth of steel production (provisional data) has been recorded as 4.2%.

(b) Currently most of the integrated steel plants are operating at maximum of their installed capacities. Moreover, a number of capacity expansion projects by major steel companies are undergoing. The slower percentage growth in steel production may, therefore, be attributed to relatively higher base in the preceding years.

(c) The import of total finished steel has increased during the last two years as shown in the table below:-